

MY PERFECT ALIBI

a comedy in two acts

(or one act of violence followed by two acts of cover up)

by

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CHARACTERS

- DAVE - Twenty-five to thirty, laid back, living in the moment.
- GLADYS - Mid twenties to mid thirties. Would be career woman, has given up looking for Mr. Right. Just wants her life back.
- MEG - Gladys's roommate, mid twenties to mid thirties. On the same career path as Gladys but would chuck it all for one good fantasy--just doesn't know what that fantasy is.
- ANDREA - Dave's neighbor, mid twenties to mid thirties.

SETTING

Dave's one bedroom apartment.

Stage right is a kitchenette with a pass thru peninsula (or island) giving us clear view into the kitchenette. Continuing upstage is a door leading off left to an all in one hall--broom--linen closet. Along the back wall far right is another door leading to the bedroom and turning left a third door opening into the bathroom. Next to this is a stretch of wall with a small table holding bric 'n' brac, including the house phone and answering machine. Along the left wall (upstage) is window covered with out of date curtains and down left stands the front door opening outside to a concrete patio shared by all the residents of this apartment complex. Downstage right there is a small K-mart table with two chairs that serves as the formal dining room. Downstage left of center is a sofa facing the fourth wall (audience) and an unseen TV. Next to the sofa is a side table on which sits a Video game box for Grand Theft Auto among other debris.

There is more than five feet of clear walkway between the back of the sofa and the upstage wall.

TIME

ACT I

Scene 1 A sunny mid afternoon

Scene 2 Forty-five minutes later

ACT II

Scene 1 Moments later

ACT I

(At rise.

An apartment living room. We can see the kitchenette from here as well. Mary Tyler Moore would faint. This is a man's apartment. A bachelor's apartment. And is in deep need of rescue.

DAVE sits facing us on the couch. He has a remote in his hands and is currently playing a rather loud video game. The doorbell rings.)

DAVE

(Engaging the controller as he rises from the couch:)

Yep. Yep, yep. Hold on, I'll be right there. Hold on. Hold onnnnnnn. Hold it---- There.

(He hits save on the controller.)

Coming.

(He drops the controller onto the sofa as he crosses around the back of the couch to answer the front door. He opens the door to let in:)

DAVE

(Pleased to see her:)

Gladys!!

GLADYS

(Stepping into the room but only a step:)

You're smothering me.

(That said she draws a handgun out of her purse and points it at Dave. The gun fires once, followed by two more shots. A beat. A fourth shot is fired from the gun.)

(DAVE falls back behind the sofa, onto the floor. GLADYS says nothing. She stands there shocked, unsure what to say, what to do, how to react. Even unsure of what has just happened. She looks over at DAVE, lifeless on floor. There is a pause.)

GLADYS

Dave?

(No reply. Nor can she really expect one to follow any time in the near or far future. Pause.)

If it helps I saw this going so much differently on the drive over here.

(Pause. She looks around again very aware now not to touch anything . . .)

GLADYS

What now?

(She checks her watch. With her foot she carefully swings the door closed, making sure it latches. She now focuses on the gun in her hand--what is that doing there? She holds it by two fingers on the grip as if it were a foreign object or a dirty diaper. She debates where to set it down. Drop it on the floor? Lay it next to the body? Softly release it onto the sofa? Back in her purse? She chooses her purse. She now moves away from Dave and around the front of the sofa; further into the room.)

Shit.

(She moves to the window and peaks out through the curtains to see her car. She is now overtly aware of other windows to the other apartments around her.)

Shit. Shit, shit, shit.

(She begins to pace. Her attention turns to the TV screen. She looks down at the remote on the sofa. Tucking her hand into the cuff of her sleeve she pushes a button on the controller. BANG! BANG! Whiirrrr!!! The sounds of Dave's video game come back alive. GLADYS jumps at first but then realizes . . .)

OK, OK, that can work. Nobody heard anything. Just--

(She reads the box on the coffee table the game came out of:)

-- Grand Theft Auto.

(Looks to Dave:)

Thank you.

(She starts to move around the apartment cautiously; checking out all the details herein. Dishes in the sink, what cupboard doors are open, what are shut, nothing in the microwave, half filled grocery bags used as trash cans hanging from the door knob. Finding a paper towel rack on the counter she uses a paper towel to protect herself from leaving prints as she check the bathroom--opening the door she looks inside: nothing to speak of. She decides NOT to look in the bedroom. Coming full circle into the living area she happens across the answering machine. Voices from the TV start talking aloud. A male voice screams out at the cops daring them to try and take him alive. GLADYS again jumps. She catches herself and breathes through her mouth--in/out, in/out. She debates turning the sound off

GLADYS (CONT.)

but then again, thinks better of it. Returning to the matter of the answering machine, using her paper towel she--

TV

Take that you son of a --

(Shots fire.)

GLADYS

Oh for godsake--

(She moves back to the remote and, although she 'wants' to shut it off, she lowers the volume then returns back to the answering machine and, using the paper towel, hits play.)

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Woman's voice--could easily be Gladys)

Dave, do not think I am returning your call: I am definitely NOT returning your call. I want you to stop calling. Got it? Stop. I'm tired of changing my number.

-- BEEP --

(Same voice:)

Really Dave? Really? Twenty-three CALLS!? I wish someone would kill you and take you out of my misery. - BEE--

(GLADYS swiftly shuts off the machine. Then she realizes and tries to wipe off her finger print from the off button which turns it back on:)

ANSWERING MACHINE

Recording out going message.

GLADYS

Holy crap--

(She stops herself.)

ANSWERING MACHINE

-- BEEP --

(Plays back her message:)

"Holy crap."

(GLADYS, tries to hit buttons without leaving prints, using the paper towel, her elbow or anything to just make it stop. She finally, gripping the cord inside the paper towel, rips the wire out of the wall. She stops to breathe. The TV answers her with another volley of gunfire. She tries to regain her composure. She fishes into her purse, removing the gun, again holding it by two fingers and sets it aside. She then rummages through her purse to find a prescription

bottle of pills. She takes two then looking around debates how to swallow them without water. She tries -- she gags. She spits them out in her hand. Another breath: another try . . . she gags. One more time. She swallows. A beat. She can't breathe. She rushes to the sink and again using any way she can to not touch anything she turns on the water and sticks her head under the faucet. After succeeding on flushing down her medicine and then shutting off the faucet, she looks over the sink area to see;)

GLADYS

Hair? Hair? Is that my . . . ?

(She tries to examine it without touching the counter. She can't be sure. She leans back on the counter . . . thinking . . . defeated?)

Cleaning supplies. I need cleaning supplies. Scotch tape.

(She returns to her purse. She pulls out her cell phone and through the following dialogue she returns the gun to her purse and after covering her hands further with more paper towels looks around for cleaning supplies, tape, bleach, anything--wiping away the prints she's not leaving behind as she goes and discarding her used paper towels into her purse in the process.)

Hello? Hello? God, answer. Answer, answer, answer--

(Someone answers:)

Hello!? -- Meg? Meg? It's me. Gladys. -- How many Gladys's do you know? -
--- Three. I know three Megs, thank you very much. -- Meg Ryan does too
count, I met her last year at that *thing* convention. -- OK; fine--that's not the
point. I need you to do me a favor.

(A beat.)

I need you to come and . . .

(Peering out the window again:)

let me use your car for the afternoon. -- You can drive my car. - No, there's
nothing wrong with it. Haven't you ever just wanted to drive a convertible? It's
such a beautiful day. You *can* drive a stick, right? -- Why do you need to know?
Just get the second set of keys from the desk. -- Third cubby on the left. -- Are
you looking at it? -- Are you standing in front of the desk right now? -- Well, go
there. -- That's nice, good for your mother. OK, are you there? -- OK, look on
top of the desk. You see the cubby holes? -- Where we put the stamps. -- Where
they're supposed to go. -- OK, good, third cubby out (on your left.) -- Far left. -
- In the back. -- Good. Use them. -- And leave me your car--stop talking while
I'm talking, OK? - Leave me your car. -- No, I don't have keys. Just leave them
in the glove compartment. -- Why not--just do it.

(Looks outside again.)

Address? Uh.

GLADYS (CONT.)

(Looking through Dave's mail setting next to the now defunct answering machine:)

324 Mockingbird Lane. - No, that's not the Munsters. -- Apt. 12 - Never mind you don't need to know that. Just leave the car. - Hey, can you do me this one?: drive it around the block and walk over - There's no parking, that's why. -- Yeah, just walk up and take my car. Leave your car. -- Because I asked you. I'll owe you one. - OK, fine: remember the time you and-- -- Good, and I'll never bring it up again. -- This is the last time, I swear. Just . . . do this one thing for me and don't ask any questions. -- Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Just hurry. -- Oh, and bring me my lap top.

(She hangs up. She then wipes off her cell phone and puts it back into her purse. She looks around again but not back at Dave. Finally she sits down on the sofa, careful not to leave any marks, threads or hairs where she sits. She stares into the set as Grand Theft Auto continues to berate her senses. She looks at the controller. Using the paper towel, which now has become an appendage of her hand, she hits the button on the game controller. The sound rises back up. Guns fire. Tires squeal. GLADYS sits silently waiting.)

Light fade.

SCENE 2

(At rise:

GLADYS is still on the sofa. DAVE is still lying behind the couch, still dead. The game is still shouting out at us, however GLADYS is now holding the controller; paper towels embedded between her own flesh and the plastic of the remote. She is totally absorbed into the game and all but oblivious to the scene behind her. She drinks beer from a can, found, ostensibly, in the refrigerator, through a straw she has concocted from a ball point stick pen she took from her own purse. She would talk to the screen if she had her druthers but she is still too aware for that.)

(There is a knock at the door. GLADYS freezes in position. Only her eyes move. She waits. Waits for whoever it is to go away or holler for her to turn the volume down. Either would be okay. Anything but:

(Another knock. A series actually, suggesting somebody playful behind the door. Someone in a good mood A mood that is bound to change for both of them if Gladys were stupid enough to open the door. All this is conveyed by GLADYS' s not moving at all. There is a long pause. GLADYS's eyes glance to the window. Carefully, quietly she inches her way to the edge of the couch and then to the floor. She moves across the floor, staying low and sets herself under the door, below any hope of being seen through the door's peephole. Having succeeded so far, she then stretches herself over toward the window to check to see if Dave can be seen should the friggin' would be Avon Lady decide to sneak a peek before giving up. Everything seems safe as long as she doesn't open the door. Still low, GLADYS scootches her way across the room to take asylum in the kitchen. Half way there:

(The doorbell rings.

(GLADYS stops but only for a moment then double paces her scootching into the kitchen. Pause. We can just see her, crouched on her haunches, praying or making some deal with the forces of the universe to send the caller away. She is almost in tears when:

(Her cell phone rings . . . from her purse . . . on the sofa.

(GLADYS raises her head just enough to see over the counter and visually locate her purse on the couch. Pause. The phone continues to ring.)

MEG

(On the other side of the door:)

Gladys? Are you in there? Gladys?

(GLADYS doesn't reply. She doesn't move.)

MEG (outside)

(Playfully:)

I know you're in there. . . . I can hear you.

(No reply. Maybe if she just says nothing--)

MEG

Gladys?

GLADYS

(Covering her mouth to answer if only to not have her name said again:)

Coming. Be right there.

(She opens and closes a cabinet door, hoping it will sound like an actual door; it doesn't. She hurries up and goes to the front door but doesn't open it.)

Meg?

MEG (outside)

Who else, silly? Open the door.

GLADYS

What are you doing here?

MEG (outside)

You asked to borrow my car.

GLADYS

Where is it?

MEG (outside)

Around the corner.

GLADYS

Great. Thanks. Take mine.

MEG (outside)

Are you going to open the door?

GLADYS

Nope.

MEG (outside)

You also asked me to bring you your laptop. I've got it here--

GLADYS

Just leave it in the car.

MEG (outside)

(Giggling:)

What is going on?

GLADYS

I'm not dressed, alright?

MEG (outside)

Have you got a man in there?

(A beat.)

GLADYS

You caught me. So just put the lap top in the car, okay?

MEG (outside)

I can't leave it in the car with the door unlocked.

GLADYS

Then lock the door.

MEG (outside)

With the keys in the glove compartment?

GLADYS

Then leave it unlocked. I'll take my chances. Or leave it on the doorstep.

MEG (outside)

Glads, I'm not going anywhere until you tell me what is going on.

(Pause.)

MEG (outside)

The neighbors are looking at me strange.

(GLADYS panics. She pulls the cushions off the sofa and throws them over Dave.)

MEG (outside)

(Continued--to a neighbor:)

Hi, how ya doin'?

(But before there can be an answer GLADYS opens the door and pulls MEG inside, swiveling her around in the process so that Meg's back is to the sofa while at the same time GLADYS swings the front door closed again with her foot.)

MEG

What the he-- . . . You're not undressed.

(GLADYS just stares at MEG. At this point we can see that both women are roughly the same age, in similar styles, career women in search of their careers. But this isn't the moment for that. MEG stares back at GLADYS who stares at MEG who stares at GLADYS. Nothing is said and Gladys has still not let go of Meg's shoulders; holding her in place. The stare down continues.)

MEG

Is this a blinking contest? Cause I'm pretty good at those--

GLADYS

(Finding the words:)

If I tell you this . . . it will change our relationship forever.

MEG

You're gay?

GLADYS

No.

MEG

Bi-Curious I think they call it now--

GLADYS

I'm not-- . . .

(She stops herself: it's not worth discussing now.)

(A beat.)

MEG

Where are we anyways?

(No reply.)

Are you going to let go of my arms?

(No reply. Still playing along:)

Where-are-we?

GLADYS

(Deciding to bring her up to date slowly:)

. . . Dave's.

MEG

(Realizing . . . letting it sink in:)

The Dave? The Dave's?

(No reply.)

Dave is here?

(GLADYS strains not to answer.)

MEG

Is Dave here?

GLADYS

Yes . . . and no.

MEG

Whaddo you mean?

GLADYS

(Let's go of one and only one arm.)

Don't . . . judge me.

MEG

(Takes in the mystery.)

Wowww.

(Enjoying a secret as much as the next guy:)

Wha'd you do?

(Pause.)

GLADYS

. . . I'm going to let go now. But--before I do--I need you to promise. You won't say anything.